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Modernist gardens
Twentieth-century heritage
Australian Museum of Gardening



Cover: Detail from *Centenary Homes 1934–1935*, The Building Industry Congress of Victoria, Board of Publicity, Melbourne, n.d. [1934], cover.

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Drawings from the 1984 Royal Park Master Plan competition winning entry prepared by Laceworks Landscape Collaborative (Brian Stafford and Ron Jones). These images, which encapsulate the essence of the proposal, have become iconic elements of the highly acclaimed design in their own right through frequent reproduction. (Details from panels 1 and 3 of 3.)

Courtesy Ron Jones

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Enquiries

TollFree 1800 678 446

Phone 03 9650 5043

Fax 03 9650 8470

Email

info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Website

www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Postal Address

AGHS, Gate Lodge
100 Birdwood Avenue
Melbourne Victoria 3004

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Editors

Christina Dyson
Richard Aitken
editor@gardenhistorysociety.org.au
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Dr Louise Moran

44 Wilson Street

Curtin ACT 2605

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Queensland

Glenn R Cooke

Phone: 07 3846 1050

racoonoo@gmail.com

South Australia

Ray Choate

Barr Smith Library

University of Adelaide

Adelaide SA 5005

Phone: 08 8303 4064

ray.choate@adelaide.edu.au

Southern Highlands

Laurel Cheetham

28 Charlotte Street

Burradoo NSW 2576

Phone: 02 4861 7132

l.cheetham@bigpond.com

Sydney & Northern NSW

Stuart Read

Phone: 02 9326 9468

stuart1962@bigpond.com

Tasmania

Elizabeth Kerry

PO Box 89, Richmond TAS 7025

Phone: (03) 6260 4216

liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au

Victoria

Dr Anne Vale

PO Box 7, Koonwarra VIC 3954

Phone: 03 5664 3104

heriscapes@optusnet.com.au

Western Australia

Caroline Grant

9A Grange Street

Claremont WA 6010

chhgrant@yahoo.com

Modernist gardens: conserving a vulnerable heritage

Christina Dyson & Richard Aitken

book *Observations on Modern Gardening* (1770) to Peter Sheppard's *Modern Gardens* (1953). The word 'moderne' is often associated with the Art Deco style, popularised by successive expositions in Paris between 1925 and 1937. And 'international' is generally associated with the functional modernity of architecture from the 1920s to 1970s. This last word perhaps gives us a vital clue in distinguishing between what is modernist and what is merely modern. International style architecture developed in large part from the teachings of the German Bauhaus design school, established after the First World War. Wartime destruction had given rise to new social and physical needs, especially housing. Commonly linked was the need for health and social inclusion. New materials such as glass and steel, honesty in construction, and design where form followed function, were its indicators.

We see these ideas translated in the garden in a shifting emphasis towards people over plants, the conscious integration of outdoor living spaces into overall house planning, and in functional, flexible spaces accommodating multiple and changing uses over time. Yet, as two of our authors in this issue explore, application of modernist ideals was slow to influence garden design in Australia and in Britain.

Modernist ideas gained traction in Australian gardens after the Second World War, when the more casual modernism of California (as opposed to the precise and faceted geometry of cubism, for example) found a receptive audience in Australia. Perhaps this was due to our equable climate, the buoyant optimism of the post-war years, and an Australian way of life more closely reflecting that of America than Europe. Such optimism also drove major developments associated with housing and infrastructure and this contributed to rising concerns about the environment. Some of these ideas coalesced in the Australian bush garden and other designed landscapes that embraced the naturalness of the Australian bush and indigenous landscape.

In the twentieth-first century, many significant modernist and twentieth-century gardens are now under threat for a range of reasons. For many, it is the insufficient passage of time for their historic, social, or creative achievement to even register as important. Others have not yet been adequately studied so that what is significant about them—and therefore why we should care about them—is not yet fully understood. This can result in something as simple as the removal of a row of trees, as recently occurred behind the Margel Hinder fountain in Newcastle, depriving this sculpture of its context. Adverse impacts can however be more profound, and even insidious, through nibbling away at a park's edges, carving major roads through their core, or constraining maintenance regimes. Large park lands at the edges of our major capital cities, some set aside in the nineteenth century such as the Adelaide Park Lands and Royal Park in Melbourne, are coming under increasing threat from state-sponsored infrastructure projects. It is often difficult to argue against worthy major public projects, such as hospitals, but even these need to respect our rapidly vanishing and taken-for-granted garden heritage.

Modernist and twentieth-century gardens and designed landscapes need champions in Australia. There is great potential for the Australian Garden History Society to take a leading role in shaping public perception of the importance of these vulnerable places and in advocating for their conservation.

'What is a modernist garden?'
Many gardens have been
described as 'modern', from
Thomas Whately's influential

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Colleen Morris

Modernist design and the Australian garden

Major fountain commissions brought flashes of inspiration to public spaces in the post-war years: the James Cook Memorial Fountain, Newcastle, NSW, commissioned and built in the 1960s is the masterwork of Margel Hinder (1906–1995) and one of the major modernist fountains in Australia. Photograph Anne Fisher

Modernism was slow to filter through to Australian garden design, but its uptake—especially after World War Two—has produced a heritage that is now rapidly being destroyed.

The recent exhibition ‘Sydney Moderns’ at the Art Gallery of New South Wales shows the richness of modernism in Australian (and specifically Sydney-based) art in the early twentieth century. Yet Australia did not embrace modernism in gardens. Was this because, in a country widely perceived as ‘young’, there was no great need to be free from the yoke of styles in the garden?

The Griffins introduced to Australia ‘organic’ modern ideas emanating from Chicago in the years immediately before and after World War One. This was concurrent with the fashion for essentially formal gardens promoted by writers such as architect Hardy Wilson. Yet Wilson’s gardens, like those by Edna Walling and her ilk,

were essentially Edwardian. As a concept Griffin’s planned suburb Castlecrag in Sydney’s north (developed during the 1920s) paralleled modern ideas emerging from the Bauhaus that architecture and planning could form the basis for a utopian community with design as a great improver of the masses. This had limited appeal in Australia although Griffin’s approach presaged a late flowering of the Modern Movement in the nation’s designed landscapes almost fifty years later. It is unclear, however, whether practitioners in Australia saw any commonality between Griffin’s utopian ideas and those coming from Le Corbusier and the European Bauhaus.

Despite the gradual flow of recent international ideas to Australian architecture in the late 1920s and 1930s, garden design derived from the Arts and Crafts movement prevailed, although a nod to the new lines in architecture came with the use of fastigiated conifers and poplars—modernism as motif rather than all-embracing philosophy.

There was, however, an increasing appreciation of eucalypts as sculptural elements, an emerging desire for garden that was Australian in character, and growing concerns for the conservation of native plants. This was a time when younger generations still read Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopaedia*, an appealing encyclopaedia that ran until the 1960s, which promoted the ideals of the British Empire, with its world affairs and scientific sections regularly updated but its aesthetics firmly entrenched in the idealised bucolic charms of the Edwardian era.

Prior to World War Two articles on modern gardens in Sydney-based newspapers were almost non-existent, in contrast to a steady increase in frequency in Victoria and Queensland, and in particular within South Australia. Added to that was the confusion about modernist landscapes which fell into two broad groups: stylised geometric European gardens favoured by glossy architectural magazines, against a more philosophical embrace of primeval nature or bucolic agricultural landscapes as a foil to the pure geometry of Modern architecture—this latter an extrapolation of the socialist notions that were associated with the Modern Movement. Although the seminal book *Gardens in the Modern*

Landscape (1938), in which British landscape architect Christopher Tunnard presented his functional approach, was available through major local booksellers there was very little on the subject published in Australia.

A small number of Australian architects had travelled overseas in the 1930s, returning with direct experience of the European Bauhaus. But the hiatus of the war meant that their ideas barely touched the general public until over a decade later. Indeed, until émigré European architects arrived in Australia post war, one of the critical factors in the slow uptake of modern ideas had been the paucity of teachers and architects with a direct connection with European Modernism. During the 1950s, however, a new breed of young architects departed Australia, returning with international experience and qualifications. Much architectural debate pitted 'organic' designs against a more functional 'geometric' ethos in modern house design, but most protagonists generally preferred a naturalistic setting.

Leaders of the Modern Movement spoke of design as a new way of life but to what extent that was understood by the general public and how it meshed with the appreciation of modern architecture perhaps goes to the heart of why there



An exceptional 1930s Australian garden influenced by modernism is Everglades, Leura, NSW, the design a collaboration between owner Henri van de Velde and garden designer Paul Sorensen—a single white-trunked Eucalyptus sclerophylla provides an outstanding aesthetic counterpoint to the simplified geometry of the Lookout's design. Photograph Richard Stringer

are so few really accomplished modern gardens around notable surviving examples of modernist houses. Few architects provided much guidance as far as the garden was concerned. There were no stylistic rules. A key component as to why the aesthetic architectural ambitions were open to dilution by horticultural fussiness is that many architects did not understand the most basic urges of gardeners. One resolution to this problem was to borrow from the eighteenth century landscape (or 'modern') garden when Arcadian verdure swept up to the house banishing all horticultural activities to a walled garden out of sight. But that would have entailed a reversion to historical precedent, a practice rejected by committed modernists. The reality remained that gardening was the slowest of the art forms to take on new ideas. Most Australians stuck with their *Yates' Garden Guide*—the updated 25th edition (1952) included a sketch of a modern house but the garden plan was derived from a tried and true layout.

During the 1950s, six axioms of modern landscape design were more clearly defined by American landscape architect Garrett Eckbo and his Californian colleagues (synthesised here after American garden historian Marc Treib): the denial of historical styles, concern for space rather than pattern, landscapes for people, destruction of the axis, plants as entities and sculpture, and integration of house and garden. Of these it was the integration of house and garden that captured the public imagination in Australia. The *Australian Home Beautiful* and other magazines included articles demonstrating how new ideas could be incorporated into pre-existing homes. Readers were urged to explore the potential of their homes for the creation of patios while ideas from the Small Homes Service appealed to the DIY crowd, which made up the majority of the readership.

By the late 1950s Australians—following the American West Coast example—were increasingly captivated by the barbeque. Sunset Books out of California, such as *Landscaping for Modern Living*, brought practical advice to the Australian suburbs. Functionalism had become an accepted norm. Other ideas, including the retention of mature trees, filtered through to a new generation of home-builders. But this was the Modern Movement in a diluted form in a relatively austere post-war era. The quest for universal truths did not touch this audience.

By the late 1960s the desire for functional landscapes combined with an increasing appreciation of the bush as well as ideas based

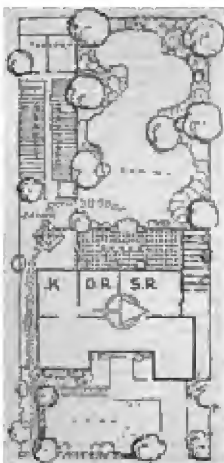
on an ecological approach to design meant that a number of landscape practitioners developed an emphasis on the experiential qualities of landscape. This embodies a holistic appreciation of environmental design, rather than the merely decorative. Often associated with the Sydney School of architecture, they turned from the Bauhaus, adopting a more organic approach, a distant echo of Walter Burley Griffin's response to the Australian landscape. It was a shift in modern architectural thinking that occurred at precisely the same time as conservationists were pushing for a new kind of garden—the bush garden. While the two movements had different roots, there was a common ground. This movement is today represented by some of the most significant surviving examples of modern landscape architecture in Australia. But by the 1970s—when the best of the ideas were being implemented—post-modernism was on the rise. The modern ecological garden barely had time to be fully appreciated.

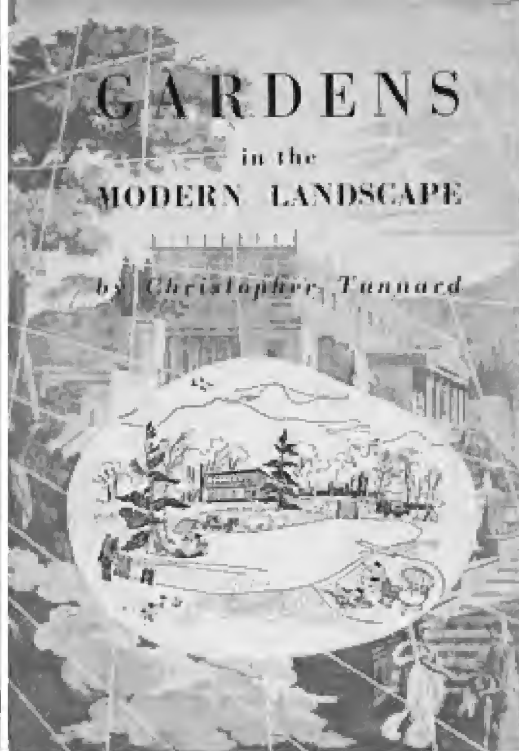
This evolution of modernism to converge with ecologically based design was so successful that now—almost 40 years later—it is taken for granted. These landscapes appear to have always been there. At times the underpinning philosophy is either not understood or read on shallow terms, as for example, in recent trends for axial planning and formalism in design.

So why are landscapes that bear the hallmarks of modernist thinking subject to bad planning decisions, leading to actions that are destroying the best among them? Or alternatively, how should we approach design to respect such landscapes? The key may be to go back to the underlying design principles of modern landscapes, or the six axioms outlined earlier. Of these 'a concern for space rather than pattern' and the 'destruction of the axis' are the most often transgressed. Instead recent designers—or more often managers—fill spaces with new features and explore ways of introducing axial planning into asymmetric schemes. If each landscape was approached with respect for the way of thinking that underpinned the original design, then outcomes might be much improved.

Colleen Morris is a longstanding member and former chair of the Australian Garden History Society. She is the author of *Lost Gardens of Sydney* (2008) and most recently, in association with Roy Lumby and Peter Spearritt, of the report *The Modern Movement in New South Wales: a thematic survey of places* (2013).

This plan by a Melbourne University architecture student, published in the widely circulated *Australian Gardening of To-day* (1943), was a rare modernist foray in popular gardening handbooks (and even then, gentle rather than strident in form).





Toby Musgrave

The conundrum of the modernist garden: a British perspective

Between the two world wars British garden owners rejected functional modernist principles and the evolution of a progressive garden form by designers was stymied by conservatism.

The social and economic toll for the victors of the First World War was huge. Three-quarters-of-a-million dead and as the rolls of honour in almost every school testifies, a huge loss of talent. Great Britain entered the war as one of the world's most prosperous countries and exited it a debtor nation due to the £11,325 million cost of the war effort.

That mammoth of domestic architecture, the country house, did survive the war, as did its garden—but in a much weakened state due to new and crippling taxes, increased fuel prices, and an unavailability of servants. However, the interwar period also witnessed a great socio-economic change with increased wealth distribution and the rise of the white-collar middle class. Nowhere was this more visible than in the more than 4½ million new owner-occupier suburban homes, each with gardens large by today's standards.

The precursors of modernism had been seen on Continental Europe before the war, for example in the theories of Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche, the literature of August Strindberg and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and the art of Wassily Kandinsky and Pablo Picasso. Now in the interwar years, as the upheaval of modernism arrived on British shores, this abrupt break with tradition had profound impacts on architecture, literature, poetry, furnishing and decoration, music, sculpture, and painting.

But what—when the De Stijl movement in Holland, architects such as Le Corbusier and André and Paul Vera in France, and Fletcher Steele in the USA were beginning to evolve a new approach to garden design—did the British do? In an interview with your correspondent, the pioneering landscape architect Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, who had trained as an architect and whose the inter-war years work included the very modern Caveman Restaurant (1934–36), opined that British gardeners 'fought off the Modern Movement jolly hard'.

The sway of the Edwardian Arts and Crafts garden, epitomised by the collaborative works

Landscape and Garden, 3 (1), Spring 1936, cover; Christopher Tunnard, *Gardens in the Modern Landscape*, The Architectural Press, London, 1938, dust jacket; detail of the Regatta Restaurant (lower left) from 'Festival of Britain Number', *BICC Bulletin*, No. 4, Summer, 1951, cover.

Private collection

between Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll, held fast in both country house and the new suburban gardens. In Jellicoe's view, interwar gardens 'were all Edwardian, they were based on history, on Lutyens'. Professional designers simply gave their clients what they wanted. Jellicoe admitted that his garden designs from this period were 'dead from the neck up' and designs by others were often incongruous. Professor Peter Behrens, for example, set New Ways—his early modernistic house in Northampton—on a raised rockery and surrounded it with 'old-fashioned, cute, quaint, kitsch crazy paving!'

But why, when modernism was all around, did the gardener continue to gaze backwards, wearing rose-tinted spectacles? In my opinion, gardeners were temperamentally unwilling or unable to cast off the past because the British have always seen the garden's function as a space in which to cultivate plants—something that the climate enables them to do with great diversity. To fulfil this role the garden simply did not need a Modern makeover. Additionally, in suburbia, the cottage-garden-cum-Arts-and-Crafts fashion melded perfectly with the aspirational *rus in urbe* psychology of the new middle class and the Tudorbethan architecture of the semi-detached residence.

In an editorial for the 1936 edition of *Gardens and Gardening* (an annual published by *The Studio*) F.A. Mercer asked the rhetorical question 'Is there a 1936 style?' He recognised 'a definite trend [towards] what is called modernism' in architecture, furnishing, and decoration of the home, but 'this does not seem to apply to gardens, which seem mostly to follow traditional lines'. This prompted a second question: 'Is it that no effort has been directed towards the adaptation of the garden to the new style of buildings, or has it been found that gardens do not lend themselves to the new treatment?' No direct answer was given, but it is suggested that by the mid-1930s no-one had tried to create a modern garden in Britain.

In fact Mercer was wrong, there were modern gardens made in the early 1930s. For example, the triangular rose gardens of Orchard House in Bristol had echoes of Gabriel Guevrekian's garden for Villa Noailles in Hyères, France (1933), acclaimed as one of the period's most innovative gardens. Making use of modern architectural extensions from the modernist house into the surrounding lawns, thus creating a garden frame that was often planted traditionally, was an approach seen at Bentley Wood (1935–38) by Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Tunnard, and St Ann's Hill (now St Ann's Court) by Raymond

McGrath and Tunnard (1936–38). Indeed, when asked for his opinion whether there had been any innovation in interwar garden design, Jellicoe stated that there was 'Jolly little! Except for Tunnard ... He was the only pioneer in the modern field ... I think his work was exploratory'.

In his polemical *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* (1938) Tunnard expounded his principles for the modern garden. Armed with the idea that he needed to produce a picture in a frame (condensing the Picturesque to what it essentially was—the influence of paintings) and a prospect (the distillation of Capability Brown's English landscapes), Tunnard identified three sources of inspiration appropriate to a Modern approach. Functionalism, or fitness for purpose; the empathic, an Orientally-inspired influence towards nature expressed symbolically in asymmetrical composition; and the artistic, based upon the principles of Modern art. This was the first deliberate attempt to formulate a British modern garden between the wars. It was also its swan song.

It was not until the brave new world following the Second World War, specifically the Festival of Britain in 1951, that the small modern garden had its genesis. The most striking example was the Regatta Restaurant by Peter Shephard and Maria Shephard. With its abstract, free form, informal use of rock and gravel (building materials not subject to rationing), plantings of sculptural specimen shrubs and ground cover, and sinuous pool (complemented by Lynn Chadwick's abstract bronze sculpture) this was a wholly new garden form. The elements of the design if not the style itself became popular in suburbia because they were inexpensive, easily achieved, worked well in a small space, and required little maintenance.

Let me conclude with the words of Jellicoe, who said that 'The Festival landscape, like the architecture, broke completely with the past, whose traditions had become increasingly emasculated during the period between the two world wars, and produced a wealth of new ideas, some of them from abroad (in particular works by Roberto Burle Marx and Thomas Church), which have since been consolidated in a contemporary vernacular.'

Toby Musgrave is an independent scholar with a degree in horticulture and a PhD in garden history. He is the author of eight books, a frequent lecturer, blogger, and contributor to television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. Although English he now lives and gardens in Denmark. He will be a keynote speaker at The Body in The Garden crime & garden writers' festival in Adelaide (25–28 October 2013).

www.TobyMusgrave.com

www.GardenHistoryMatters.com



Julie Collins

‘Nature’s Sanatorium’: the open-air treatment of tuberculosis at Nunyara, Belair, South Australia

Tuberculosis ravaged the world throughout history, yet with no cure, open-air treatment at sanatoria was all that could be offered in the early twentieth century.

In 1911 visiting English botanist, rambler, and author Frederick S. Salisbury, in one of his series of newspaper articles for the *Advertiser* (30 May 1911), described arriving at Belair township in the Adelaide Hills as entering ‘the land of sanatoria’. He was following a well-trodden path. Vivienne May, in her travelogue titled *The Sunny South* (1908), made mention of having passed through Belair, the ‘place where doctors advise

people to go who want a quiet spot with not too strong mountain air, wherewith to regain lost health and strength’.

Belair nestles in the hills about nine kilometres south east of Adelaide at an altitude of 320 metres above sea level. During the late nineteenth century, the small township had become a valued health retreat for Adelaideans with the perceived benefits of altitude, climate, and landscape contributing to its popularity. As a result it became the location for two tuberculosis sanatoria built at the turn of the century—Kalyra, a charitable institution opened in 1895, and Nunyara, a private sanatorium opened in

Looking south west through some of the original pine trees at Nunyara, probably planted by the sanatorium’s first medical superintendent Dr Arthur Gault.
Photograph Mick Bradley



A vintage French postage stamp with a perforated border. It depicts a young child in a dynamic, almost dancing pose, wearing a light-colored outfit. The text 'de l'air pur' is written in a stylized font on the left. The year '1931' is printed in the bottom right corner. The stamp is set against a dark background.

central administration, dining, and kitchen block. Constructed of freestone with red brick dressings and a Marseilles terracotta tiled roof, the building featured deep north facing balconies with verandahs, ample windows and doors, and easily disinfected hygienic surfaces. Although no original plans of the buildings or gardens are known to survive, a small promotional booklet on Nunyara Sanatorium contained photographs that provide evidence of its designed landscape. When taken together with written descriptions of the facilities and grounds a clear picture emerges.

The grounds spread out down the hills to the north, with buildings laid out in a shallow curve overlooking the Adelaide plains and Gulf St Vincent. Within these grounds a series of garden and park-like spaces were cultivated. Close to the road a grove of eucalypt trees defined the boundary and screened the backs of the buildings. In front of the accommodation wings, a formal garden was planted and terraced down to lawns planted with specimen trees, dotted with summerhouses and benches, and crossed with walking paths. A productive landscape of orchards, grazing areas, and farm buildings supplying food and milk was established further to the south. Planted hard up to the balcony were what appear to be either standard roses or staked flowering plants in rock-edged beds. As Dr Gault owned one of the first motorcars in South Australia it is perhaps unsurprising that a sweeping gravelled driveway curved along the

entire length of the building fronts. The use of the motorcar for scenic drives in the hills was even advertised to attract paying patients. On the lower side of the driveway, stone steps led down to a formal garden planted with bedding annuals and roses, marked today by a tall palm.

The white painted timber of the buildings was reflected in the garden with their structures also festooned by flowering climbers. Further gazebos and structures are evident further down the slope. Among these were two rotating shelters constructed on a circular iron track so that they could be rotated away from the wind. These shelters included a bed for the patient to rest and were commonly found in tuberculosis sanatoria throughout the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and the United States. For those patients in the recovery phase of the disease, exercise along the walking paths was an important part of the open-air treatment and the grading of such paths with benches placed at regular intervals were carefully designed elements of sanatoria landscapes. (Patients were also encouraged to take walks in the locality including the nearby National Park.) Further down the hill, additional outdoor shelters provided rest areas for walkers as well as affording spectacular views. The booklet featured a 'Mia Mia', demonstrating the rustic style for garden structures, a popular design ethos that was used extensively for bridges, shelter sheds, and arbours in Belair National Park.



Publicity shots from the booklet *Nunyara Sanatorium for the Open-air Treatment of Consumption* (c.1910) showing the buildings, gardens, grounds, and rustic 'Mia Mia'.

Courtesy State Library of South Australia



Looking westwards along the driveway that ran along the front of the sanatorium balcony and the reverse scene in the early years of the sanatorium (c.1910).

Photograph Mick Bradley; early image courtesy State Library of South Australia

Pine trees—long regarded for their health-giving properties—were a popular choice of planting at sanatoria throughout the world and Dr Gault planted many at Nunyara. The landscapes in which pine trees occurred and the vapours they emitted were both taken as beneficial to tuberculosis sufferers. Eucalyptus trees often surrounded Australian sanatoria and their vapours too were invested with health benefits for consumptives, promoted by some Australian doctors in the belief that ‘eucalyptus is far better for the purpose than pine’ (*Argus*, 23 December 1898). These beliefs were beginning to wane, and by the 1920s germ theory had supplanted miasmatic theories of diseases. Many of Nunyara’s pine trees remain today and contribute to the character of this now residential area.

Following Dr Gault’s death, in 1917, Nunyara was variously used as a military hospital, residential flat accommodation, and a convalescent home. In 1945 ownership passed from the Estate of Gault’s widow to the Co-operative Building Society, which proceeded to subdivide the land into 42 residential blocks. In 1946 the Methodist Church bought the Nunyara Sanatorium buildings and remaining grounds to use as a youth camp and today it enjoys a new life as a Uniting Church conference centre.

Sadly, even in 1911 F.S. Salisbury was writing in the *Advertiser* of ‘The Despoiled Hills’ surrounding Adelaide which he saw as he descended from Belair. Looking down into Brownhill Creek Gully he noticed how ‘Large stone quarries scar the slopes right opposite, where men are busy like mice nibbling at a great hard cheese.’ He also recorded the ‘carts bringing firewood down into Adelaide for the winter’, noting that the hills would ‘recompense

us for their spoilation with the dry stare of drought instead of mist-veiled heads’. During the second half of the twentieth century, with the discovery and implementation of antibiotic therapy and preventative vaccines in combating tuberculosis, the role of the landscape in the treatment of disease gradually lost popularity. Current medical research is, however, reassessing the role of nature, green space, and place in relationship to health and well being, hopefully leading to healthier environments as well as a healthier population.

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Dr Julie Collins is collections manager of the Architecture Museum in the School of Art, Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia. Her research combines architectural history with social and cultural fields, particularly modernism and the effects of climate on design.



Gloria Strzelecki

'Make friends with the cactus': floral art and Australian modernism

Floral art—in the sense of both flower painting and flower arranging—was a leading force during the interwar period in bringing modernism into the Australian home.

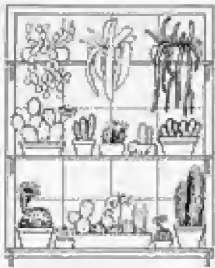
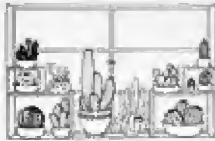
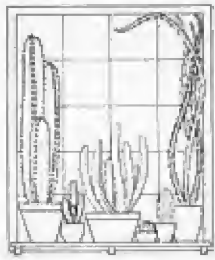
In March 1929, *Art in Australia* advertised its sister magazine *The Home* with the slogan 'Modernism has reached Australia'. Taking up the theme, the text continued: 'The wave of modernism which has flooded the intellectual centres of civilised countries has penetrated Australia. It is already perceptible in its art, its music, its architecture, its household furniture and decoration, its literature, its photography and its landscape gardening.' And in the June 1928 issue of *The Home*, artist Adrian Feint had encouraged Australians to 'Make friends with the

cactus' and remove the dated palm from their interiors. Clearly modern aesthetics were not just tied to the traditional sphere of the art gallery but infiltrated into most aspects of everyday living in Australia. A major shift was especially felt in the way domestic and public interiors were furnished and decorated, particularly in regard to works of art and modes of interior decoration, such as the floral arrangement.

Modernism permeated the Australian consciousness through a variety of sources, but a dominating presence was the influx of publications on art, homemaking, and decorating. Periodicals, such as Sydney Ure Smith's *Art in Australia* (1916–42) and *The Home* (1920–42), and Helen Blaxland's quintessential books *Flower Pieces* (1946) and *Collected Flower Pieces* (1949), also published by Ure Smith, were the purveyors, promoting and advocating new trends.

Sadly not an Australian image, but this view of 'Mrs. George Oliver's collection in Philadelphia' exemplifies Adrian Feint's exhortation to 'Make friends with the cactus'.

Cactus and Succulent Journal: Amateur "Bulletin" Section (1942), private collection



Arrangements of cacti for the windows of the sunny modern interior

Cactus and Succulent Journal: Amateur "Bulletin" Section (1942), private collection

A select group of tastemakers often contributed to these journals, infusing the styles and ideals of modernism into the Australian public's psyche. Of these, the artists Margaret Preston, Adrian Feint, and Thea Proctor were frequent contributors. 'The easiest way to understand modern art is to buy an example and live with it' wrote Preston in *Recent Paintings* (1929), 'Custom makes consciousness'. Indeed, books and other publications had a significant role in bringing modernism into the sphere of the everyday life of the Australian middle class. Through printed matter, Australians were encouraged to be—and without a doubt became—consumers of modern products, which amongst other items such as household appliances and furniture, often included art works.

By the early to mid-twentieth century the slightly marginalised genres of flower painting and still life proved a popular subject in modern art. As curator Craig Judd explained in *Cornucopia* (2009) for the artist 'with more advanced, modernist inspired tastes, flower painting and still life was viewed as a suitable intellectual challenge'. Judd added that the artist's studio acted like a laboratory, where simple or elaborate set-ups were possible and works were explorations of formal and content relationships, the former embracing line, form, and space, and the latter aspects such as unusual juxtapositions of flowers and their containers. Flower painting provided tremendous potential for such investigations. While some traditionalists such as artist Hans Heysen still considered modern art to be 'the work of freak painters', floral paintings were widely embraced by the general public as suitable works of art for the home. The flower as a subject had mass appeal; it was safe in terms of content, easy to understand, and aesthetically pleasing. Even when rendered in modern guise the flower painting could provide enjoyment in the home for these three reasons.

Art was often brought into the Australian home through flower arrangements ensuring that elite artistic tastes could be brought into the popular realm.

Helen Blaxland, *Flower Pieces* (1946), private collection

The artist Margaret Preston (1875–1963) was amongst Australia's most revered and well-known flower painters. Many of her early works, such as 'Western Australian gum blossom' (1928) formed examples where the ideals in modern art, such as simple design and the limited palette, were exemplified. Both the irregularity, asymmetrical, and minimalist shapes of the native Australian flora and the faceted and angular vases testify to the bold streamlined lines of the Art Deco movement. Thea Proctor had co-authored the quintessential article 'The gentle art of arranging flowers' in the June 1924 issue of *The Home* with Margaret Preston, capturing the spirit of the age. Unlike Proctor, Preston's ideal arrangement featured native Australian flora. As Proctor noted, Preston took 'the native flowers of the country from the rut of disgrace into which they had fallen'. In elevating native Australian plants to a suitable modern subject, Preston's flower choices were evident in her works. Just as Adrian Feint favoured the cactus, the banksia featured heavily in Preston's work. The cactus, with its sharp and unique edges, was thoroughly modern, with the banksia considered an Australian equivalent due to its strong cylindrical shape and severe leaves.

Alongside Margaret Preston, there were also artists, such as Adrian Feint and Thea Proctor, who made floral paintings, but whose practice also extended—and was inextricably linked—to floral arrangement. And as Australian households moved away from the cluttered, elaborate, and flamboyant styling of British-inspired late Victorian or Edwardian trends in homemaking, to clean, light, and simple fashions, the modes for using flowers and indoor plants to decorate the home also changed.

The artist Thea Proctor (1879–1966) was a strong advocate and promoter of modernism. While her works were steeped in strong traditional aesthetic





ADRIAN FEINT *Flower Paintings*



Edited by Sydney Ure Smith Introduction by Tuckey Miles
A FINE SOUTH PUBLICATION

values, Proctor's approach to colour, design, and outlook made her thoroughly modern. Her painting 'The Mask' (c.1935) was included on the cover of the February 1935 issue of *The Home*. This work demonstrated her interest in European flowers alongside the balance and harmony found in Japanese art. Such Orientalism was an influence on many modern artists. As the May 1932 issue of *Australian Home Beautiful* observed: 'With a great deal of the Orient in its blood, Modernism is concentrating ornament in a few objects'. For those—like Proctor—who favoured the simple and minimal modern aesthetic, the order and restraint of the East would provide great inspiration.

Adopting the stark contrasts of the modern ethos, artists and floral arrangers toyed with unfamiliar combinations. Flower choices became more varied, and interesting groupings that included mixing Australian natives alongside European

and other more exotic plants—and even roadside weeds—became the norm. Furthermore, the traditional vase was either replaced with an overly elaborate vessel as a counterpoint to basic compositions, or a simple bucket, tin, jar, or any other found container which might hold an extremely formal arrangement. The well-regarded authority on the craft was British florist Constance Spry (1886–1960), and her philosophy of using unassuming materials displayed in diverse containers—gravy boats, tureens, baking trays—influenced many of these Australian arrangers. Witness the display from her post-war book *Summer and Autumn Flowers* (1951), with its use of eucalyptus, spray of oranges, decorative tomatoes, and assorted berries. These curious juxtapositions between the flower, foliage, and the vessel were one of the more recognisable changes brought by the advent of modernism.

Diverse forces combined during the mid-twentieth century to influence the floral art in the Australian home: a bowl arrangement of succulents by Melbourne enthusiast Ron W. Burbury; flower and foliage arrangement by Constance Spry; dust jacket illustrating Adrian Feint's painting 'Susan in the moonlight' (1944)

Cactus and Succulent Journal: Amateur "Bulletin" Section (1942), private collection

Constance Spry, *Summer & Autumn Flowers* (1951), Carrick Hill Trust, The Hayward Bequest

Adrian Feint, *Flower Paintings* (1948), private collection



Selected reading

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Adrian Feint (1894–1971), whom arts impresario Tatlock Miller thought ‘The most distinguished painter of flowers in Australia’, promoted his work through a lavish volume, *Flower Paintings* (1948), beautifully crafted by publisher Sydney Ure Smith. Feint’s paintings were often random scenes of intense drama that leaned toward the whimsical and fantastical alive with intriguing juxtapositions. So too were his floral arrangements. Like Spry, Feint was interested in exploring the potential of various materials displayed in the most unusual of containers. In *Collected Flower Pieces* (1949), compiled by Sydney art patron Helen Blaxland (1907–1989), Feint proclaimed: ‘the most important thing in the arrangement of flowers or foliage is the vase’. In the accompanying arrangement an atypical mixture of begonia leaves, fern leaves, and natural grasses—that would have made Spry proud—were placed in a delicate fluted glass cornucopia and were accompanied to the side by an early Victorian glass ball filled with shells. In the following image, Feint added additional native grasses, dark canna leaves, nandina flowers, and large-leafed Virginia creeper into a particularly ornate Chinese vase.

Feint’s slightly older contemporary, Thea Proctor, also featured in Blaxland’s *Collected Flower Pieces*, and in her arrangement she employed a very simple display of begonias and leaves in a red vase. Although illustrated in black and white, one can imagine how the green bowl holding

the fruit and dark red roses placed to the right would balance the overall arrangement. Making reference to the Japanese floral arranging art of Ikebana, where form focussed on one principal part of the plant, Proctor noted that ‘each flower has its value, and its form is not destroyed by being placed too close to another flower’. Sydney Ikebana master Norman Sparnon (1913–1995) was one of the next generation who took this influence to great heights, with his teaching and legacy of books such as *Japanese Flower Arrangement: classical and modern* (1960), *The Beauty of Australia’s Wildflowers* (1967), and *The Poetry of Leaves* (1970).

Margaret Preston, Thea Proctor, Adrian Feint, and those other modern aesthetes whose creative minds took the humble flower and turned it into a worthy subject, with fresh and contemporary ways of presenting flora, whether in floral painting or arrangements. Such designs were all made accessible through various modern publications, bringing fresh ideas to contemporary audiences—ideas that now resonate amongst a new generation.

Gloria Strzelecki is Gallery Manager at Adelaide Central School of Art and author of *Kathleen Saubier: a modern pursuit* (2011) and *Jacqueline Hick: born wise* (2013). This paper was first presented at The Johnston Collection as part of The Garden of Ideas exhibition and its revision has been facilitated by the *Australian Garden History* editorial mentoring scheme.



Photograph Morgan Allender



Photograph Amy Merrick

The modernist uses canvassed here of assorted flower and plant combinations, and the unique resourcefulness of the diverse utensils used as receptacles, have continued as inspirations in contemporary floral arranging. South Australian artist Morgan Allender not only paints flora, but she designs compositions reminiscent of the modern era. And while Brooklyn-based American designer Amy Merrick’s combinations are reminiscent of Feint’s intoxicating concoctions of berries mingling with daisies, it is also the Constance Spry inspired tea canister that evokes the modern aesthetic.

Vol. 34.—No. 1764.]

[Thursday, 4, 1913.

The Bulletin

Registered at the General Post Office, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, for Transmission by Post as a Newspaper.

Silas Clifford-Smith

The black and white garden

From its establishment in 1880, Australia's weekly *Bulletin* magazine—the 'bushman's bible'—has been a rich store of national folklore, with surprising richness for garden historians.

One of the delights of visiting the Mitchell Library in Sydney is the chance to view some of the hundreds of original comic drawings created for *The Bulletin* magazine. While the often profound editorial cartoons at the front of the weekly are best known, the lighter joke blocks which scattered *The Bulletin's* inner pages are also fascinating as a reflection of Australia's changing culture.

While undertaking research on several artists involved with *The Bulletin* I became aware that a small but significant number of illustrations had garden related themes. Later, I decided to explore some of these cartoons in an attempt to discover how gardens had been perceived by some leading Australian cartoonists, a group who incidentally like to be known as 'black and white artists'. The large *Bulletin* collection of original artwork in the Mitchell Library also allowed me to find good quality original works drawn by local artists.

The Bulletin was one of Australia's longest running publications, in print from 1880 until 2008. During its early years the paper was proudly radical, racist, chauvinistic, nationalistic, and republican. Its readership was diverse and the paper was extremely popular in rural areas where it became known as the 'bushman's bible'. From the early years of the twentieth century *The Bulletin* became increasingly conservative and slowly moved its editorial gaze away from

rural subjects towards the suburban values of the growing cities. In cartoon terms this meant an increasing focus on humour related to middle-class leisure activities such as golf, motoring, shopping, dining, and of course, gardening.

Garden related cartoons were mostly seen in the paper from the end of the First World War up to the time the paper changed ownership to Sir Frank Packer in 1961. It can be no coincidence that this four-decade period was also the time when the popularity of home gardening as a leisure pursuit was arguably at its peak.

A dominant theme in *The Bulletin's* garden related cartoons was the labour disputes between married couples. A typical cartoon would show the man of the house labouring in the garden (sweat invariably pouring from his head) while his bossy wife would scornfully direct works from the comfort of the veranda. This sort of image doubtless appealed to the mainly male target audience of the weekly.

Other popular subjects include the ignorance of new gardeners, adapting to technological change in the garden, conflict between owners and their garden staff, and interaction by visitors with statues in our public parks. Another surprising subject was the antipathy to the growing of cactus and succulents that followed the widespread infestation of prickly pear around the country, a pest plant that jolted public and politicians to action in the 1920s and 1930s.

Ideas for jokes often came from *Bulletin* readers themselves, who would receive a small fee if their idea were used. Contributing artists were then commissioned by the paper's art director to work

The famous eye-catching pink cover of *The Bulletin* and artistically scripted masthead hint at this magazine's lively agenda, although by the date of this issue (1913), the journal had softened its early radicalism.

Private collection



The Bulletin was not the only publication to embrace such comic images. Other periodicals included them and the specialist gardening press occasionally published garden cartoons, although many were sourced from popular overseas artists such as English cartoonist Norman Thelwell whose work was often reproduced in *Your Garden*. By the late 1970s jocular cartoon images of gardens disappeared from the printed page. Hopefully the tide of garden ‘good taste’ will turn and like the increasing respect given to political cartooning we will see a return to seeing comic imagery in our gardening periodicals.

R.W. Coulter; 'If only the Joneses would try to keep up with us!', [1957], State Library of New South Wales (PX*D 458-86)

Roller
7230+1959
p.18



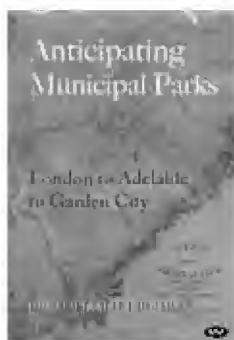
"It only the Joneses would try to keep up with us"



Silas Clifford-Smith is a Sydney-based horticulturist, art historian, and writer with a special interest in the interwar period. He blogs as The Reflective Gardener and is the author of *Percy Lindsay: artist and bohemian* (2011).

Anticipating Municipal Parks: reappraising Adelaide's Park Lands

Donald Leslie Johnson



Can you imagine in fantasy or with reason anything about human beings, the individual or the society, that is not conditioned by historical evolution? Yes, a gospel declares we are the sum total of all that has past, the product of accumulated bygone actions. The treasury of those actions we set out as the historical record. More than a reminder, the record assists our understanding of modern societal composition and interaction.

It follows that when new evidence about past human activity is revealed, it must be examined and recorded for scholarly and public scrutiny. During the course of evaluations divergent views may form. They arise because the inevitable changes instigated by human progress constantly modernise our perception of all things including our understanding of the past. Therefore, the end of the examination process requires scholars and society to set aside the prejudice, myopia, and cussedness of popularised tradition and agree that knowledge is valuable.

Historical refreshment is illustrated in my book *Anticipating Municipal Parks* by the alignment of new evidence that stimulated fresh interpretations of the linear unfolding of events that led to the creation of Adelaide's wonderful park lands in the 1830s. Then a link was easily made to the worldwide municipal park movement begun twenty years later. *Anticipating Municipal Parks* corrects and enhances the historical record: rationality and common sense prevail.

It is seldom recognised that parks within cities is a new and nourishing phenomena devoutly cherished. Parks were not found in ancient cities bordering Mediterranean waters, those weary cradles of Western civilisation, or during the church-centered centuries of medieval and renaissance Europe. Later—and specifically related to Britain—the sharp contrast in a baroquely deformed Europe between natural nature (so to speak) and synthetic design, was not wholly accepted by the English. Consequently, when it became necessary to expand cities, the English did not resort to pompous theatricalities

or unnaturalness. On the island of Great Britain, therefore, grand axial perspectives and regimentation were avoided: exceptions few. Even the park landscapes of grand classical country mansions were softened by long tree-and-lake lines, curved carriage routes, rolls of land: all to satisfy overly stuffed senses.

In the eighteenth century a re-evaluation of nature found it not just usefully bountiful but equally it had aesthetic potential. Expressions were realised in refined ruralscapes that titillated the wealthy and poseurs. It was high artistic fervor short lived, soon swept away by the pervasive, permanent effects of industrialisation. Indeed a revolution for good and evil.

Urban historian Erwin A. Gutkind studied the resultant conflicting phenomena and found two lines of action ascended. 'There was the line followed by [those] sincerely searching for ... new and humane solutions', he wrote. 'This line led the reformers to a serious though somewhat confused examination of the existing problems and to suggestions of possible remedies ... The other line followed by ... the speculators and industrialists, originated in the cast desert of moral insensibility and dreams of wealth ... [In short] There were the dreamers without means but with humanitarian goals, and the realists without social goals but with the means.' Those jarring oppositions infiltrated as laudable contributions to colonising South Australia and to the physical form of Adelaide.

Among the reformers was the Scottish gardener and prolific author John Claudius Loudon and the loquacious English MP John Arthur Roebuck. Within their contributions during the 1820s and 1830s were calls for the infusion of accessible gardens, arbors, walks, and accessible parks lands into existing cities for reasons moral, ethical and healthful. They wanted to vitalise cities and thereby uplift laboring poor and common folk. What excited this historian was their demand for rings of parks (Loudon's idea in 1829), for 'green belts' (Roebuck's term in 1832), for 'walks' and 'gardens and trees, they said, all to bring

the natural world within urban proximity. Their rather holistic idea was interior to planning for and the creation of Adelaide.

Make no mistake: colonial Adelaide's town plan was known in London, Dublin, Edinburgh, Berlin, and Paris. The idea of publicly endowed park lands as embodied in colonial Adelaide proceeded in Britain on an historical path that in the 1850s engendered the creation of publicly endowed municipal parks. Soon they flourished as emblems of civic duty and pride. Even the Crown began to bequeath its parks to the public. City parks, however, were possible only after passage of the Municipal Corporations Act.

Philosophically, strategically and practically the 1832 Reform and 1835 Corporations Acts were giant strides toward a public state and away from the private royal kleptocracy. The Acts were supported by many of those promoting the colonisation of South Australia and most of the learned and more influential traveling colonists.

Anticipating Municipal Parks indicates that the theoretical genesis for the institution of municipal parks was in the thoughts of reformers like Loudon and Roebuck. But what was the practical source? I shall be concise. The world's first intentionally conceived and positioned internal city park and first urban green belt were Adelaide's. Initially described by George Kingston in 1835, they were laid out on the ground by him and William Light, January into March 1837. These historical distinctions must be vital components of today's perceptions of Adelaide.

Provocations and deliberations leading to colonial Adelaide and then to the activity of its creation embodied all that tested and shaped a burgeoning, ambitious, unstable, yet self-critical and reforming England. Who then could know that the verdant parks of a small colonial town would contain expressions of a humanistic archetype so valuable.

Adelaide's park lands were something special. Colonists believed that when the village became a city, park lands would become priceless; that contemplation might be enjoyed in proximity with nature; that there is symbolic merit and transcendent experiences to be found not only on seashores and in mountain forests but in city parks, gardens, and riversides. They encourage one to disassociate from urban racket, hardness, coarseness, and commercial frenzy, to walk slowly or rest, to breathe deeply, to recompose.

Goethe, Kant, Wordsworth, and Thoreau were right. Recent research has demonstrated that the experience of city people sharing natural environments has almost immediate restorative and healing benefits. Over 100 years ago naturalist John Muir reminded us that 'Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.' And so said Loudon in 1829 and Roebuck in 1832; and so did George Kingston act for Adelaide in 1835.

This oration was given in Adelaide, on 27 August 2013, by Donald Leslie Johnson at the launch of his book *Anticipating Municipal Parks*, published by Wakefield Press.

Donald Leslie Johnson is one of Australia's most distinguished architectural historians. But to circumscribe his scholarship to just one discipline is to overlook his major contributions to the history of town planning, gardens, and other designed landscapes, to biography, and to design theory. His lengthy curriculum vitae reveals a generous scholar, willing to contribute to publications from high-end academic scholarship to local magazines.

Don was born in 1930 and trained in the United States, with a string of architectural positions from 1958 and study with Louis Kahn, before he moved to the University of Adelaide in 1967. Since then he has also been associated with Flinders University and the University of South Australia. He has been a great champion of the history of modernism, with his seminal work *Australian Architecture 1901–51: sources of modernism* (1980) a standard work, and his contribution to Griffin and Frank Lloyd Wright studies widely acknowledged.

Acutely aware of the value of archives and exhibitions, he has worked diligently to further these ends. He was the founder of the excellent Architecture Museum at the University of South Australia: much of its founding collection sat for many years in cupboards in his various offices or under his bed patiently awaiting a suitable repository. He takes the long view.



Recent Netscapes have reviewed some of the expanding and exciting cache of online research tools made possible through increasingly sophisticated technology and digitisation projects. Here we explore a not-for-profit foundation, The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF). According to TCLF, the Foundation is the only one of its kind in America 'dedicated to increasing the public's awareness and understanding of the importance and irreplaceable legacy of its cultural landscapes'. In reviewing the web-based presence of an organisation with some parity to the Australian Garden History Society, this Netscape invites a degree of self-reflection.

TCLF was founded in 1998 by Charles A. Birnbaum, a landscape architect with long experience in historic landscape preservation (the US equivalent of the Burra Charter's 'conservation') and in urban design. Supporting him was Sally Boasberg (1937–2012), a Washington-based landscape designer and a dogged landscape advocate. Their common concern was to promote widely the value and fragility of America's cultural landscape heritage sensing that a heightened consciousness of the value of these places would assist in their preservation. Rather than a membership funded organisation, TCLF seeks and attracts donations for its different programs from a range of private foundations and public monies.

The Foundation's mission is 'Stewardship through education', and achieves this through a series of programs, all with a significant web-presence. TCLF's core efforts include 'Landslide' which advocates for significant landscapes at risk. Online exhibitions and feature articles from external authors ensure debate is informed and lasting. (Lack of success is measured in 'Lost landscapes'.) 'Cultural landscapes as classrooms' aims to teach all ages how to 'read' landscapes and to understand how change can affect them. Virtual access is provided

to these places through photographs, plans and drawings, text-based information, video interviews with designers, patrons, and others who have made extensive study of them. 'Stewardship Stories' celebrates the work of individuals—working on the basis of 'one person can make a difference'—who work within their own communities to raise awareness of significant cultural landscapes.

The Foundation also harnesses existing and encourages the contribution of new knowledge through 'What's out there'. The brainchild of Charles Birnbaum, WOT is a searchable database of America's designed landscape heritage. As an online, freely accessible digital database that catalogues the vast range of historic designed landscapes in America created over a span of two centuries, this resource is comparable to the Australian Heritage Database and other accessible online heritage registers. The value of WOT, however, lies in its exclusive focus on cultural landscapes, its currency, and comprehensive national span as well as its format, which facilitates comparative analysis, and its interactive component. Contributions are encouraged and invited from the public—surely a model to consider for Australia.

The special magic of TCLF is the gathering together of documentation, debate, and education in the one place, and its suite of innovative ways to make an impact on public perception of significant cultural landscapes. TCLF also sets a high bar for the championing of modernist landscapes and vulnerable twentieth-century heritage, including works of landscape designers still living yet whose careers are substantially complete. It also celebrates significant achievement in landscape architecture in the twenty-first century—the game changers, our heritage of the future.

There is a lot to be impressed about by The Cultural Landscape Foundation. Its finger is on the pulse, taking bold new directions in response to diverse and changing audiences. While its funding model and success are somewhat enviable and a product of a benefactor culture less common in Australia, TCLF's programs, ideas, breadth and innovation in terms of outreach, its championing of modern landscape design, landscapes at risk, and exciting contemporary works, and its embrace of the full spectrum of modern media are worthy of our serious attention.

Christina Dyson

I am a regular visitor to this feature of TCLF—the Birnbaum Blogs. These approximately monthly contributions (cross-posted in the *Huffington Post*) celebrate bold initiatives in landscape and urban design, raise awareness of landscapes at risk, and annually celebrate Notable Developments in Landscape Architecture. The Blog also provides a space in which overviews of some of the bigger issues arising from the 'Landslides' program, for example, can be aired.



Review essay

Thinking about Australian garden making

Ray Choate

Richard Aitken, *Cultivating Modernism: reading the modern garden 1917–71*, The Miegunyah Press in association with The University of Melbourne Library, Carlton, Vic., 2013 (ISBN 9780522861228): paperback, 224pp, RRP \$39.99

Anne Latreille, *Garden Voices: Australian designers – their stories*, Bloomings Books, Melbourne, 2013 (ISBN 9780646905204): hardback, 248pp, RRP \$59.95

Anne Vale, *Exceptional Australian Garden Makers*, Lothian Custom Publishing Pty Ltd., Middle Park, Vic., 2013 (ISBN 9781921737114): paperback, 198pp, RRP \$70 (available from heriscapes@aussiebb.com.au)

Three new books have been added to the canon of Australian gardening books: it is a pleasure to welcome them, especially as they make important contributions to our understanding of design, gardening, landscape, and related matters. The three authors approach their subjects from very different viewpoints, making for a rich new contribution to scholarship on Australian garden history. Each volume brings a sympathetic interpretation of their varied subject matter, thereby bringing our understanding of persons, and of gardening trends and designs up-to-date.

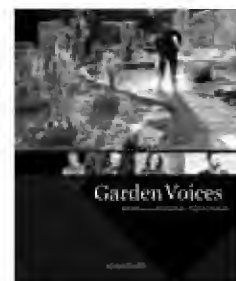
Richard Aitken has risen to the challenge of writing about modernism in relation to gardens, an unenviable task. In the tradition of earlier Aitken monographs, *Cultivating Modernism: reading the modern garden 1917–71* is a treat, both in extending our knowledge and understanding of gardens in Australia and, in this particular instance, modernism and the garden. We are all aware of modernist design in art, architecture, and decorative arts in the early to mid-twentieth century, but much less confident regarding modernist garden design. One's understanding comes closest, I believe, when we consider the modernist garden as a backdrop, complementary certainly, for architecture. When we can see examples, we are better able to visualise the connections and parallels. Aitken's richly illustrated text goes far in informing the reader by way of photographs, drawings, and plans.

Until I had read this book, my experience with modernist gardens in Australia was mainly Everglades (designed by Paul Sorensen in the 1930s) in the Blue Mountains, and a smallish urban garden in North Adelaide designed by

Gavin Walkley for his Robin Boyd house. My understanding has been considerably broadened by Aitken's book, however, and we owe much to his initiative and to his innovative scholarship. The book looks at the international context, and twentieth-century garden design in several chapters chronologically arranged. The interest of twentieth-century Australian gardeners and garden designers in the local flora is examined including interesting variations such as 'tropical modernism' reflecting the diversity of flora in Australia, and its special relationship to our varied environment and climate.

There is considerable emphasis on the value of popular books and magazines, including the Australian and overseas house-and-garden journals. The influence of these publications with their visual presentations is emphasised. The numerous illustrations in the text link the reader to this material—the author informs us that most of these books are in public collections in Australian libraries, or in private collections. It is a rich lode, indeed, which the author has mined. We are grateful for his efforts, and pleased to know that further exploration and research are possible using these valuable resources.

Garden Voices: Australian designers – their stories, by Anne Latreille, pays close and serious attention to over twenty garden and landscape designers in Australia, including some of their design work in gardens overseas. Eagerly awaited, the book is based on detailed and long-term research and looks at designers who not only demonstrate a special relationship with the Australian landscape but who made a creative impact on garden and landscape design in our private gardens and public spaces. These include such important designers of the first half of the twentieth century as Walter Burley Griffin and Edna Walling. The coverage of contemporary practicing designers includes Bernard Trainor (now practicing in California) and the Adelaide-based firm of TCL (Kevin Taylor, Kate Cullity, and Perry Lethlean) with its designs for private and public gardens throughout Australia, most notably the Australian Garden of the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, but also for landscape (streetscape) design for North Terrace in Adelaide (winning the South Australian Medal for Landscape Architecture in September 2013).



Latreille has brought together designers whose many contributions are distinctly Australian, often by incorporating and basing their work on the native flora and landscape in innovative and exciting interpretations, and which attract international attention, enhancing the reputation of our landscape designer profession.

Each biography includes an overview of their 'Life' (background and career) together with coverage of their 'Work', which surveys their output in general, including specific examples of gardens. Importantly, in the final sections of each entry the author gives 'Voice' to the designer addressing the reader with their 'Message' (summarising their major design principles) and with 'And in Australian gardens ...' (a section which provides gardening ideas, again based on their design principles, for the home gardener). The result is a stimulating and useful reference work for major contemporary Australian garden designers and design. Latreille's book is beautifully illustrated, a pleasure to read, and as well as successfully introducing several new designers, gives new insights into the more well-known ones.

They are an incentive and a guide to readers who will want to delve further into the literature

Exceptional Australian Garden Makers, by Anne Vale, reflects serious research by the author, including studies undertaken for her PhD: while scholarly it is written for the general reader. Gardening and garden design in Australia is explored from the earliest days, when practice and ideas were 'imported from a distant land'. The greater part of the book is concerned with twentieth-century gardeners, designers, and horticulturists; some well known, and others less so, at least to this reader. The book also emphasises the important role of training institutions, especially the Burnley School of Horticulture founded in Melbourne in 1891. Many of the gardeners and designers mentioned in the text had connections with Burnley having studied or taught there, or worked in its gardens. It is also interesting to note the number of female students who were involved with the institution.

The author provides insights into the persons included within the book's scope, and gives information about their interests, development of gardening ideas, and influence on garden design.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the inclusion of garden makers and their own gardens, for example Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's Cruden Farm and Joan Law-Smith's Bolobek.

Many of the subjects were major contributors to the literature of Australian gardening, either in the form of books, or as writers of gardening sections of newspapers or home and garden magazines, for example Olive Mellor who had a long career writing for *Australian Home Beautiful* (1934–70). The books and articles, and their illustrations, were of seminal importance to the popularisation of gardening in Australia at the time when the nation was becoming increasingly urbanised. They were also influential in the introduction of new styles and new plants. At the same time, their influence led to a better understanding of Australian flora and its design importance, and increasingly its ecological and environmental significance especially in a country where the majority of us live in the large urban cities on increasingly smaller blocks.

Vale's book itself has many photographs, again emphasising the value of illustration: the gardening experience is enhanced by historical photographs of gardeners at work, many in the Burnley gardens. It is to be hoped that the new Australian Museum of Gardening, being developed at Carrick Hill in Adelaide, will develop a photo archive of Australian gardeners at work, which would go far in demonstrating how some of the tool exhibits were used (I refer to a photograph of 'well-dressed gardeners' with their mowers which included two young boys, presumably students at Burnley, pulling one of the mowing machines).

Reflecting on these three titles, it is important to note that all of them are profusely illustrated, essential for a contextual understanding of garden style and design. As a librarian and bibliophile, for me they serve an important function as a bibliography of Australian and international gardening literature, both books and journals. They are an incentive and a guide to readers who will want to delve further into the literature not only of the past but, importantly, into the most recent publications and to learn more about the people, places, and trends described and analysed. My recommendation? You need all three.

Ray Choate is a University Librarian at the University of Adelaide Library, an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, a keen student of bibliography, and compulsive book purchaser.

Recent releases

Julie Collins & Christine Garnaut, *'Not for ourselves alone': the South Australian Home Builder's Club, 1945–65*, Architecture Museum, School of Art, Architecture and Design, University of South Australia, and Crossing Press, Adelaide & Sydney, 2013 (ISBN 9780987120021): paperback, 112pp, RRP \$15

This is the latest in a series of uniform volumes published by the Architecture Museum of the University of South Australia—the eighth in its yearly output. Drawing on the Museum's strong local collection of plans, books, ephemera, and oral history sources, this book by collections manager Julie Collins and director Chris Garnaut falls partway between the thematic overviews and biographical/place-based subject matter of previous volumes. Modernism is a strong suit of the authors (and their collection), and it is to be welcomed that this book highlights modern architecture and gardens in South Australia as part of this innovative and collaborative post-war design-and-build venture.

John Dargavel & Elisabeth Johann, *Science and Hope: a forest history*, The White Horse Press, Cambridge, UK, 2013 (ISBN 9781874267737): hardback, 278pp, RRP £57

Forestry knowledge has an ancient history. This book explores its modern form, commencing with forestry's so-called 'foundations' in the seventeenth century, John Evelyn's *Sylva* (1664), which brought forestry and modern science together for the first time. The book then follows a roughly chronologically sequence exploring the extension of forestry beyond Europe to its empires, scientific advances, and the divergence of ideas in the 1970s, into the twenty-first century at which point the earth's changing climate becomes an issue for politics and science. The 'hope' in the title emphasises the forester's conundrum: the need to trust that the knowledge they apply will be to good effect, as they will not live to see the outcome. This book charts both the successes and failures of forestry over three centuries, and asks now 'what might the future hold for forest science and its application?'

Adrian Davies, *Digital Plant Photography*, Bloomsbury, London, 2013 (ISBN 9781408171295): paperback, 176pp RRP \$39.99

A beautifully illustrated and accessible guide to digital plant photography that aims to build a bridge between the professional photographer and the amateur-naturalist gardener who wants to know more about using their digital camera to record plants in meaningful yet attractive ways.

Deborah Edwards & Denise Mimmocchi (eds), *Sydney Moderns: art for a new world*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2013 (ISBN 9781741740974): hardback, 328pp, RRP \$80

A substantial book published to accompany the 'Sydney Moderns' exhibition (hurry, closes 7 October) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Surveying Australian—and specifically Sydney-based—art from the period between the two world wars, this book forms a wonderful overview of a vibrant period with essays by the editors/curators and over thirty distinguished contributors. All the well-known works are here, while flower and still life painting, sculpture, interior decoration, landscapes, graphic design, and photography are also given a rich context in this survey, which is destined to remain the definitive work on its subject until a truly national overview is produced. In the meantime, the harbour city rests on well-earned laurels.

Peggy James, *Cosmopolitan Conservationists: greening modern Sydney*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, Vic., 2013 (ISBN 9781925003086): paperback, 304pp, \$39.95

Cosmopolitan Conservationists follows the coming together of modern ideas about wildlife preservation, conservation, town planning, health, educational and social reform, spiritual renewal, and the best management of natural and cultural heritage in early twentieth-century Sydney. The story is told through the intertwined lives, activities, and writings of eight influential individuals: David Stead, Walter Burley Griffin, Charles Bean, Thistle Harris, Norman Weekes, Marie Byles, Myles Dunphy, and Annie Wyatt. Together these individuals were part of a larger network of people who wished to conserve Sydney's environment and who strove to protect and enhance its beauty and the wise use of its land and other resources.

Donald Leslie Johnson, *Anticipating Municipal Parks: London to Adelaide to garden city*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, SA, 2013 (ISBN 9781862549661): paperback, 276pp, RRP \$29.95

This work brings together much that the author has previously published in disparate sources but with the benefit of considerable reflection and the chance in book-length treatment to do his subject justice. This word is used advisably, since Johnson (see profile elsewhere in this issue) and his former collaborator, the late Donald Langmead, have prosecuted the case over many

years for enhanced recognition to be accorded surveyor George Strickland Kingston and the primacy of his role in the planning of Adelaide and its park lands. What sets this book apart from other local histories is the considerable (and considered) treatment of early nineteenth-century reformers such as J.C. Loudon and John Arthur Roebuck and the context in which the author places his contentious subject park land.

Margaret Marshall, *Milleara Garden Suburb: a Walter Burley Griffin estate*, [East Keilor Sustainability Street Community Garden, East Keilor, Vic.], 2013 (ISBN 9780646585383): paperback, 116pp, RRP \$15 (available from the publisher, c/- 2 Urana Drive, East Keilor, Vic.)

This is a modest local history of the sort that can, collectively, add to greatly to the richness of our understanding for the context and development of Australian town planning and garden making. The Griffins worked on the plan of Milleara—a windswept site on the plains close to the Maribyrnong River in Melbourne's west—around 1927, at a time when they had planned several garden suburbs with characteristic internal garden

reserves. While the Griffins form the centrepiece, from here the author works backwards and forwards in her historical narrative.

Timothy Mowl & Laura Mayer, *Historic Gardens of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*, Redcliffe Press, Bristol, England, 2013 (ISBN 9781908326324): paperback, 240pp, RRP £19.95 (available from redcliffepress.co.uk)

Hot on the heels of *Cheshire* (2008), *Staffordshire* (2009), *Somerset* (2010), *Warwickshire* (2011), and *Herefordshire* (2012), this is the thirteenth and final volume in the monumental series *The Historic Gardens of England* produced by Tim Mowl. Either written solo or with one of a bevy of co-authors, Mowl's sustained output since 2002 in this series has been prodigious. Taking advantage of detailed and often very recent research, these volumes are well illustrated, with chapters aggregating their gardens in roughly chronological groupings. No mere gazetteers, these volumes bristle with opinion and repay the serious garden visitor many times over for their information and erudition.

Continued page 29

The animated positions of John James Audubon's subjects epitomised the nineteenth-century 'golden age' of scientific illustration, a key theme of John Kean's *The Art of Science: remarkable natural history illustrations from Museum Victoria* (RRP \$50)

John James Audubon, *Black-billed Cuckoo* (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) and *Magnolia grandiflora*, hand-coloured etching and aquatint, c.1828.



Dialogue

Queens Birthday honours

Coming just too late for our last issue, congratulations to those whose service has been recognised in the 2013 Queen's Birthday Honours List. Longtime supporter of garden history and former AGHS Chair, Howard Tanner, was made a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia awards 'For significant service to architecture, and to heritage conservation'. Others in the field of cultural heritage to be recognised include Officer (AO) in the General Division, Dr Michael Pearson 'For distinguished service to cultural heritage conservation and management, through contributions to professional organisations, and as an educator and researcher', and Members (AM) in the General Division, Kristal Buckley 'For significant service to conservation and the environment, particularly in the area of cultural heritage, and to education', and Emeritus Professor Norman Etherington 'For significant services to education, particularly in history, through contributions to heritage preservation, and to the community'.

Philippa Marie McMahon (1962–2013)

Philippa McMahon studied at the University of Melbourne, initially in Engineering, before transferring to Architecture, where she graduated with Honours in 1986. An early and important project was her undergraduate research on Melbourne architect David Godsell while in her final year design studio (supervised by Corbett Lyon). After working in Melbourne for Norman Day and in Sydney for Ancher, Mortlock & Woolley and also Bruce Rickard—whose architecture she admired for its strong connection with the Australian landscape—Philippa completed a Master of Landscape Architecture also at the University of Melbourne. Her research dissertation, 'Bad plants: the culture and value of weeds', was supervised by Dr Libby Robin. She married fellow architecture graduate Michael Fink and a son Joshua and a daughter Charlotte soon followed. Combining her skills as an architect and landscape architect, Philippa worked with Michael in their practice, and at the same time, commenced a PhD at the University of Melbourne.

Philippa's doctoral studies were concerned with the history of how plants have been culturally understood as 'Australian', native, or indigenous, and about what is at stake in these categories. Her case studies were drawn from the history



Philippa McMahon at
Tidal River, 2012.
Photo: Michael Fink

of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. This encompassed new interpretation of some material, which is relatively well documented, particularly the changes made to gardens by Guilfoyle when he succeeded von Mueller. But it mostly focused on developments in the post–World War Two years which are not well researched—the ideological drivers for the establishment of the Cranbourne annexe of the Gardens; the reinterpretation in the Rainforest Walk of the Queensland exotica that had been introduced by Guilfoyle; and the more recent re-establishment of immediately local flora in the Long Island section of the Gardens. It also encompassed work on a fascinating episode that had much less direct physical impact on the gardens, a breeding program for Australian plants from the 1950s aimed at enhancing their 'garden worthiness'—as Philippa memorably once put it; a search for an Australian equivalent of the gladiolus. This research was published in the journal *Australian Studies* (20 (1–2), 2005), a revised and shortened version of which was published in *Australian Garden History* (21 (1), 2009).

While Philippa had the tenacity with archival material required by any garden or design historian, she also brought to the work her engagement with a broad range of cultural theory, Australian studies, and critical histories of other institutions having some connection to botanical gardens, particularly museums. This made the work particularly engaging: discussions between Philippa and her PhD supervisors—led by Professor Catherin Bull—were always lively and entertaining. Sadly, Philippa's PhD was never finished. As a spirited and critical scholar of the Australian landscape, she will be sorely missed.

Paul Walker and Philip Goad

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning
The University of Melbourne

Alethea Russell (1927–2013)

Alethea Russell (*nee* Fairbairn) was a breed of woman that has almost passed into history. Tweed clad, with a deep and cultured voice, she was larger than life and a formidable matron of Mawallok and its great Guilfoyle garden. She was a gracious hostess and enthusiastic gardener, and reigned over her part of the Western District of Victoria with style, directness, energy, great fun, and generosity. There was something Margaret Rutherfordish about her. As a founding committee member of the Australian Garden History Society, and at one of its earliest meetings, Alethea willingly put up her hand to become Membership Secretary. These were pre-computer days and none of us had any idea that the society would ‘take-off’ as it did. Alethea was meticulous in recording members’ details on a hand-written card index system of her own devising. She was always dead accurate in her statistics and scrupulous in keeping members fees up to date. It was a huge, but thankless, task for which she received little recognition. But she did it cheerfully and with no fuss. That was her way. In those formative days of the Society she also helped forge the direction the AGHS should take. Her special interest, naturally, was to do what we could to help the private owners of important large gardens. She used her influence and connections to ensure, in those early years, that the Society was able to visit many of the great private gardens of Australia. This opened the eyes of many to what treasures lay behind closed gates and helped clarify the role of the society. The AGHS owes Alethea Russell a significant debt of gratitude.

Peter Watts

Cultivating Modernism exhibitions

This Australian Garden History Society touring exhibition is to open in mid-October 2013 for its two Victorian showings and in mid-February 2014 for its South Australian run. ‘Cultivating Modernism: reading the modern garden 1917–71’ will be on display on the ground floor of The University of Melbourne’s Baillieu Library building, while ‘Cultivating Modernism: French garden style of the 1920s and 1930s’ will be on at Tasma Gallery, headquarters of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria); both showings will be combined and refreshed with new exhibits before heading off to the Civic Gallery of the University of South Australia’s Hawke Centre (City West Campus) in time for the 2014 Adelaide Festival. See Diary Dates for further details.



Modernist arrangement by Norman Sparnon from his book *The Beauty of Australia's Wildflowers* (1967): you might never look at a Quandong in quite the same way again.

Corrections to our ‘jubilee snapshot’

In our last issue, in Roslyn Burge’s ‘jubilee snapshot’ of *Australian Garden History*, the gremlins were in the type tray (again). In the summary of editorships, Trisha Dixon’s tenure should have read ‘35 issues: 6 (5), 1995 to 12 (3), 2000’—our apologies to Ros and Trish. Our patron Sue Ebury has also sent us some notes clarifying the effort involved in publication of the earliest AGHS journals in 1980–82 and her recollection of the roles played by Miranda Morris Nunn and Anne Latreille: ‘The productions were a joint effort by the three of us. Anne and I were joint editors, helping with sourcing the content and I prepared the typescript for Miranda, following my role as the inaugural editor of the proceedings of the conference at which the Society was founded. Miranda then returned the proofs to us for checking and the process was as Anne described it, although the final paste-up and production was done by Miranda. The duplicate typescripts with comments and corrections were amongst my papers until I returned to Australia in 2004, when they were inadvertently thrown out with the packing materials when everything came out of storage. The journals, alas, did not survive the move to Hong Kong and water damage from a typhoon.’ Our thanks to Sue for sharing these recollections of the Society’s earliest days.

The Body in the Garden

This crime and garden writers’ festival will be held in Adelaide from 25–28 October 2013. With notable international keynote speakers including Charles Elliott (*The Potting Shed Papers*) and Toby Musgrave (*The Plant Hunters*), alongside many well-known Australian authors, this event in Adelaide Botanic Garden promises to be a lively and stimulating weekend for readers and writers.

www.thebodyinthegarden.com.au

Capturing Flora exhibition: Armidale showing at NERAM

The Art Gallery of Ballarat’s stunning Capturing Flora exhibition is to have an additional showing in Armidale, NSW. Newly subtitled ‘Passion for the exotick’ and surveying Australian botanical art from 1700–1900, the show is open at New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale, from 15 November to 2 February 2014 (10–5, free entry). So start your forward planning for an excursion in late spring or over summer.

www.neram.com.au

Recent releases (continued)

Sue Turner & Sally Berridge, *The Munro Court Story: an Australian housing development of energy-smart houses in water-wise gardens*, Turner and Wild Developments, Castlemaine Vic., 2013 (ISBN 9780646900902): spiral bound with jacket, 104pp, RRP \$25 plus postage (available from www.turningwild.com.au)

This is a heart-on-the-sleeve account of an environmentally friendly housing development in Castlemaine, in Victoria's central goldfields, commenced in 2001. The author's father, John Turner (professor of botany) and son, landscaper Sam Cox (who worked alongside Gordon Ford) have been just two of the many players in this ambitious scheme, the result of vision and hard work on the part of author Sue Turner and partner Don Wild. Inspired in part by Castlecrag, Bickleigh Vale, Winter Park, and Fülling, this is practical idealism at its best, simply and honestly told.

Tom Turner, *British Gardens: history, philosophy and design*, Routledge, London & New York, 2013 (ISBN 9780415518789): hardback, 472pp, RRP £35.

This book is a much expanded and extensively revised version of the British content in Turner's earlier *Garden History: philosophy and design 2000 BC–2000 AD* (2005) and uniform with the author's *Asian Gardens* (2011) and *European Gardens* (2011). Existing readers will be familiar with Turner's pithy style diagrams and also immediately recognise the excellent range of illustrations, while those new to this author and his immense output will quickly grasp Turner's broad sweep, acknowledge his mastery of detail, and hopefully make allowances for a somewhat didactic tone. Perhaps of most interest to Australian readers will be Turner's last four chapters covering the period from 1794 to the present, bringing the story—albeit from a British viewpoint—from an age of Romanticism into the world of 'Post-Abstract and sustainable gardens'.

AGHS News

Copyright Agency Limited payments

Many AGHS members have written articles for the Society's journal and other publications over past years. Recently we have started receiving payments on their behalf from CAL (Copyright Agency Limited). This Agency monitors photocopying of material in libraries and academic institutions, and collects fees on behalf of the authors. If you have been a contributor to the journal or Studies you may be entitled to a payment, which we will transfer to you on receipt of your banking details. Although many (approximately 100) of these payments are less than \$5 there are 47 from \$5 to \$50 and 40 that are over \$50 each. You may consider donating your payment to the Society—this would minimise our administrative costs and assist the Society in furthering its aims. If you would like to know how much money might be due, please email Kathy Wright at kwright1@bigpond.com. If you have been a contributor please complete the CAL payment form (available on the Society's website).

National Management Committee elections

The call for nominations to fill the four vacancies for elected positions on the National Management Committee closed as the issue went to print.

Marketing and Membership Assistant

Changes have recently occurred in the AGHS National Office with Administrative Assistant Janet Armstrong resigning after almost four years. Janet has accepted a position with the Southern Suburbs Climate Change Alliance in Narre Warren North. The Society thanks Janet for all her assistance and wishes her all the very best in her new position. Replacing Janet is Georgina Ponce de Leon, who commenced in the newly created role as Marketing and Membership Assistant in late September. Georgina comes to the AGHS having volunteered with the Friends of The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, managing membership renewals, including the maintenance of the membership database. Along with her qualifications and extensive background in the finance sector (including earlier studies in marketing), her current experience working with online media, and a passion for gardens, she seems to be a perfect fit for the AGHS as the Society seeks new avenues to expand its membership.



Georgina Ponce de Leon, who has recently been appointed by the Australian Garden History Society to the new role of Marketing and Membership Assistant.



Members of the West Australian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society at the recent twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the Branch's formation

Silver anniversary celebrations in WA

In July this year the West Australian branch of the Australian Garden History Society celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary (1988–2013). A large contingent of members joined the celebrations and witnessed John Viska (chairman) and Caroline Grant and Sue Monger (past chairs) cutting the celebratory cake.

The achievements of the WA Branch over the past 25 years have been significant and many. In 2007 *A Guide to Conserving and Interpreting Gardens in Western Australia*, compiled by John Viska for the West Australian Branch of the AGHS, was published and launched by Professor Jenny Gregory. In 2011 the Branch researched and curated the exhibition 'Historic Gardens of Perth', held at the Perth Town Hall. Recently the Branch has held two successful public forums (at the University of Western Australia): 'Understanding Place: the resource of landscape' (2011) and 'The Urban Forest: trees in our backyard and beyond' (2013). The initiative, energy, and enthusiasm of the successive chairs of the WA Branch and its members are further demonstrated in the many events for members organised over the past 25 years. These have included visits to private

gardens and historic properties, country weekends, guest speakers, workshops, indexing the *West Australian Gardener*, and viewing rare, garden-related publications at the State Library of Western Australia. The Branch has also hosted two AGHS annual national conferences—in Fremantle (1998) and Perth (2005). Branch members are looking forward with great anticipation to the 2014 annual national conference in Albany and to welcoming a bumper audience.

Social media update

Our Instagram postings continue to grow and refinements are being made as we trial this social media platform. The user name **@australiangardenhistory** has now been added, meaning that it is much easier to follow and interact with postings. The hash tags **#australiangardenhistory** and **#gardenhistory** continue to be used, linking disparate postings from around the world. Thanks to Gloria and Jess for their expert advice. We enjoy following *anigozanthos*, *jessinthegarden*, *missjuliecollins*, *salvation_jane*, and *vickithegardenobserver*.

@australiangardenhistory

Profile: Glenn Cooke

Since 1996, Glenn Cooke has been actively involved with the AGHS, initially through the Queensland Branch then also as the Queensland State Representative on the National Management Committee (2000–5). He was Vice Chair of the NMC (2004–5), and again State Representative (2013). Since 2006 he has served on the Editorial Advisory Committee for *Australian Garden History*.

I was born and raised in the small central-western Queensland town of Blackall and have been gardening since the age of seven. My father was a shearer and his duty on the weekend (in common with many men in the 1950s) was to tend his veggie patch up the back. He had a regular supply of manure from our chooks and a small herd of goats, then the only regular supply of fresh milk. Dad's other duty was to mow our extensive lawns with his Victa mower, despite the pleadings of my brother and myself—our enthusiasm diminished when we discovered it was hard work. I took charge of the remainder of the garden and had to contend with heavy, sticky clay soil. I have always been aware to the value of water. Although the town was blessed with unlimited supplies of sulphur-smelling bore-water, one only had to look beyond the edge of town to see where water was desperately needed.

For the AGHS 'Gardens of Memory' project I recently recorded my memories of visits to my mother's parent's garden, which conjured images of an oasis of green amidst the wider parched landscape. However, my interest in gardening was inherited largely through my father's family. His sister, my Auntie Bub, also lived in town and tended her veggie garden. But I marvelled at the colour of her massed displays of annuals which had the most miraculous names: *dimorphotheca*, *schizanthus*, *calendula*. She also grew the 'Tropical apple' marketed by Langbecker's Nursery, Bundaberg. The first bottlebrushes to grow in Blackall came as tiny seedlings from her sister in Southport, my Auntie Lisle, as did the tender plants that grew beneath the shade of a large date palm. Auntie Lisle was a bit of a collector and in her mind there were two categories of plants: 'I have one of those' or 'I don't have one of those!'

I completed my schooling in Charleville, got bored with working in the Public Service, and then took up art. I tried my hand in the decorating

field in Brisbane and later Melbourne, where I completed my BA in Art History at the University of Melbourne in 1977. Although I spent seven years in Melbourne my knowledge of temperate plants was only marginally increased as all my friends had no interest in gardening and my efforts were confined to pot plants. I continued studies in the United States and obtained a Master of Arts degree in Museum Studies at The George Washington University, Washington D.C. in 1979. I worked briefly in different roles at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., including at The Renwick Gallery and National Museum of History and Technology, before returning to Australia. After a brief stint at the Australian War Memorial, in 1981 I was appointed the first Curator of Decorative Arts at the Queensland Art Gallery. As I was committed to the documentation of Queensland's visual arts history, I later became Research Curator.

I am especially interested in cross-cultural influences such as the recurring impact of Neoclassicism since the 1800s, the influence of Aboriginal Art in Australia since the 1930s, and the handmade object—including the uncomplicated expressions of folk art and women's work. I'm a born collector of information as well as objects and have published extensively on aspects of the fine and decorative arts in Australia



Rusty relic, Rosser Garden, Gold Coast Botanic Gardens, in 2012
Photograph
Kim Woods-Rabidge

and Queensland. The State Library of Queensland has acquired my collection of souvenir tea towels that charts the development of the burgeoning tourist industry from the 1950s.

My publishing experience has extended to editing proceedings of the AGHS annual national conferences hosted by the Queensland Branch, 'Tropical Pleasures: a focus on Queensland gardens' (2003) and 'It's all about the Mary: a garden history of Maryborough' (2012), both published as special issues of the *Queensland Review*. My publications reveal an increasing emphasis on garden history interpreted through art. For instance 'Bouquets for the Governor's Lady' which documented the floral subjects included the annual exhibitions at the Royal Queensland Art Society 1920–40s appeared in *Australian Garden History* in 2003. The flower painting of one of Queensland's most famous artists, Vida Lahey (the subject of my presentation at Maryborough), reflects the range of 'old fashioned' flowering plants that filled Brisbane's gardens.

I am also interested in 'difference' in the development of regional identity such as charting how, since the 1970s, Brisbane's Story Bridge has become the primary icon of the city. I have expanded this focus by exploring how local and regional imagery can be accessed through plants and recently completed an article 'Aliens in Queensland: two tree portraits' by R. Godfrey Rivers focusing on the Queensland Art Gallery's iconic painting by Richard Godfrey Rivers 'Under the jacaranda' (1903). Recently I have also been investigating the poinsettia—Brisbane's official flower since 1925 (the only capital to have one I believe). Although originating in Mexico, it features prominently in Brisbane gardens.

Similarly, the poinciana, native to Madagascar, has been influential in shaping the identity of Brisbane and, more widely, has helped to develop the tropical ambience of coastal Queensland. I am also documenting a group of unique Queensland trees and how their visual representation has contributed to the image of Queensland.

In the middle of this year, I retired from the Queensland Art Gallery, where I spent more than three decades. I am now looking with pleasure to the challenges of reviving my garden, which has sustained the worst drought in 100 years, floods, and neglect through pressure of work. It won't be easy as inner city West End is in a process of great development and wildlife is concentrating into the smaller pockets of green in local back yards. After more than 25 years untroubled existence, possums have devastated my collection of crotons (my favourite foliage plant) and scrub-turkeys are making depredations at ground level. Yes! Scrub-turkeys! I can walk into the Queen Street Mall in thirty minutes.

Hopefully I will be able to pull together earlier research subjects and continue my research interests, which include producing a catalogue raisonné of the work of the famous Australian still life painter, Margaret Olley (1923–2011). And naturally I will continue my involvement with the Australian Garden History Society. Finding 'workers' is an increasing problem with all volunteer organisations as people are willing to support but not contribute to events. The increasing profile of gardening in lifestyle programs is an indication of the health benefits of growing your own produce and physical activity: the 'how' of gardening. Let me put in a plea for all members of the Society to take up the intellectual stimulation of the 'why'!

Diary dates

OCTOBER 2013

Thursday 10	1988: Visit to New Parliament House Gardens	ACT/MONARO/RIVERINA
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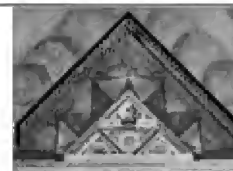
Paul Janssens, Assistant Director Landscape at Parliament House, will lead a guided tour of the courtyard gardens. Numbers are limited, so bookings recommended. 4–6pm. See Branch webpage for details.

Monday 14	Cultivating Modernism: reading the modern garden 1917–71	NMC
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This showing of Cultivating Modernism, an Australian Garden History Society touring exhibition, is on at the Baillieu Library building (ground floor), The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Vic. 14 October 2013 to 31 January 2014: free entry, open during library hours.

Tuesday 15	Cultivating Modernism: French garden style of the 1920s and 1930s	NMC
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This showing of Cultivating Modernism an Australian Garden History Society touring exhibition, is on at Tasma Gallery, Tasma Terrace, 4 Parliament Place, East Melbourne, Vic. 15 October 2013 to 31 January 2014: free entry, open during office hours. See website for details of public programmes (when dates and venues are finalised).



Friday 18–Sunday 21	AGHS Annual National Conference, Armidale, NSW
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The Australian Garden History Society's 34th Annual National Conference will be held in Armidale, 18–20 October 2013.

Saturday 26	Dr John Tooth's rhododendrons	TASMANIA
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This event will explore Dr John Tooth's extensive collection of rhododendrons. 16 Bracken Lane, Fern Tree. Further details soon.

Saturday 26	Working bee at Yallambie	VICTORIA
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Enquiries to Fran Faul on (03) 9853 1369 or malfaul@alphalink.com

NOVEMBER 2013

Thursday 7	Traditional Korean gardens	SYDNEY
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Talk by Jill Matthews. 6pm for 7–8.30pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost: \$20 members, \$30 guests, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential, to Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or Jeanne@Villani.com

Saturday 9	Spring gardens day at Kangaloon	SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS
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A special day in conjunction with Kangaloon PS visiting three gardens not normally open to the public, one of which is a surprise garden at Glenquarry. Morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea/refreshments, and bus travel. Cost: \$65 per person, members and friends, numbers limited. For bookings phone Jennifer Carroll on 0419 275 402 or download the booking form from the Branch website. All enquiries to Lyn Esdaile at garlynar@bigpond.com or (02) 4887 7122.

Saturday 9–Sunday 10	Port Arthur Historic Site and Coal Mines site	TASMANIA
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Saturday: a talk and walk with Naomi Jeffs, Grounds and Gardens Supervisor at Port Arthur, who will update us on the present conservation works in the grounds and gardens of Port Arthur. Sunday: Naomi will discuss and demonstrate the complexities of landscape management at the Coal Mines site. For further details contact Elizabeth Kerry on liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au

Thursday 21	2013: The Garden of the Future	ACT/ MONARO/RIVERINA
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We will visit Crace, a new suburb in Gungahlin. Matthew Frawley, landscape architect responsible for its landscape design and management, will outline the new principles of garden city planning that underpin its design. From 4.30pm. Details to be advised.

Thursday 21–Friday 22	Managing Gardens with History: spring garden tour	VICTORIA
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A two-day tour of gardens in western Victoria, including Eurambeen, Narrapumelap, and the Guilfoyle-designed Hamilton Botanical Gardens, among others. Cost: \$420 twin share, includes all meals and accommodation. Details and registration at www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/branches/victoria/ or contact Lisa Tuck on 0418 590 891 or lisatuckl@bigpond.com

Saturday 30	Christmas party in Weston Park	ACT/MONARO/RIVERINA
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Heritage consultants Anne Claou -Long and Rachel Jackson will speak to us about what they've found at the Yarralumla Nursery and where they see the Nursery heading in the future. From 4.30pm, Weston Park. Details to be advised.

tbc	Session in Kings Park nursery	WESTERN AUSTRALIA
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Details to be advised. Check the Branch webpage for updates.

DECEMBER 2013

Sunday 1

Christmas party, Tahara, Deloraine

TASMANIA

Christmas will be celebrated this year in Lynne and Rod Paul's beautiful garden, Tahara. For further details contact Elizabeth Kerry on liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au

Sunday 1

Christmas get-together

SYDNEY

Join our Christmas get-together. 4.30–8pm, Howard Tanner's garden in Queens Park (full address supplied on confirmation of booking). Cost: \$20 members, \$30 guests, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential, to Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or Jeanne@Villani.com

Friday 6

Christmas party

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Christmas party at the home of Elaine and Les Musgrave, Cleary's Lane, Wildes Meadow. Enquiries to Lyn Esdaile (02) 4887 7122 or garlynar@bigpond.com

Sunday 8

Christmas party

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Details to be advised. Check the Branch webpage for updates.

Tuesday 12

Celebrating 150 years of Footscray Park

VICTORIA

Christmas guided walk and talk in one of Victoria's largest and most intact Edwardian gardens, followed by BYO picnic. 6pm, Maribyrnong Boulevard (eastern end), off Farnsworth Ave (Melway 42 D2). More details on the branch webpage. Enquiries Marian Letcher on mrletcher@gmail.com



The temperate and well-watered climate of Northern Ireland is perfect for gardening and the many renowned gardens of the area are the legacy of generations of enthusiastic plant hunters and collectors over the past four centuries.

This tour takes in some of the most important private and public houses and gardens in Northern Ireland and Donegal. Many of the houses have been lived in by the same family since they were built, in some cases for 400 years. The houses and gardens have evolved over the generations, and we will have the privilege of meeting many of the owners who have made their own mark on their much-loved gardens.

Northern Ireland & Donegal Garden Tour 21 June to 30 June 2014



Enquiries and Bookings

Ann Wegener (Qld branch AGHS), who will accompany the tour

Email annwegener@me.com

Phone 0407 378 585 OR
07 3204 6580

Minimum 10 bookings required for tour to run. This tour may be offered in late August 2014 depending on interest.

**Cost is \$4,850
per person**

DOES NOT INCLUDE
TRAVEL TO OR FROM
IRELAND

Ballywalter Park, Drenagh, Ballyscallion Park, Dundarave and Benvariden are some of those we visit as well as National Trust properties *Mount Stewart* and *Rowallane*. By contrast, we will also visit some exciting modern gardens which push the boundaries of design and planting. On most days we will be hosted in a private house for either lunch, dinner, drinks or tea. Please note that all meals are provided during the tour.

We will spend 5 nights at *Ardara Country House* situated in the historic linen town of Upperlands and 4 nights in Donegal at *Castle Grove Country House Hotel*. The tour begins and ends in Belfast. Tour participants may wish to arrive in Belfast earlier in order to explore the city.

Experienced tour leaders Richard and Rosalind Mullholland, historic house and garden owners themselves will lead the tour.

A word from Liz and Knowles Kerry, AGHS members Tasmanian Branch:

"We went on the first of these tours last year, enjoyed it thoroughly and gained a real feeling for life in Northern Ireland, both past and present. We had experienced guides, often the owners themselves, who in many cases also welcomed us into their beautiful historic homes."



Richard Heathcote

Forging partnerships at the Australian Museum of Gardening

The Australian Museum of Gardening is to be established at Carrick Hill, a hillside garden estate, twenty minutes from Adelaide city centre. Nestled in the foothills Carrick Hill is the last property in the last suburb to the south of the city and with forty-two hectares reflects Adelaide's past propensity for creating manorial estates in its outlying suburbs.

The Carrick Hill Trust (a statutory body vested with the governance of the heritage site) is committed to building the facility to house the museum and its collection and to enable the program that will drive a museum whose focus is gardening and its history. Our interest in preserving, studying, and presenting stories of Australian gardening for visitors to this significant garden is the principal reason for establishing a museum of gardening at Carrick Hill.

As a first step in creating the museum the Trust has accepted the donation of The Old Mole's Tool

Collection, collected by Richard Bird, a long-time Australian Garden History Society member from Armidale, NSW. Richard will be known to many members, especially those who have attended AGHS conferences and had the pleasure of talking with him about his great interest in garden tools.

The Old Mole's collection, built up over two decades, consists of seven hundred and sixty garden tools and implements from around Australia and the United Kingdom (see AGH, 23(4), 2012). This will form the core of the museum's collection in this area and is a rich foundation of objects through which to interpret and tell the story of gardening in Australia. Other categories of material may be added to the Museum of Gardening under the acquisitions policy that the Carrick Hill Trust has in place to conserve its collections on site.

The collection was transported to Carrick Hill by Richard Bird in two consignments at the beginning

Berry combs and seed measures are among the many diverse items from The Old Mole's tool collection that will form part of the new Australian Museum of Gardening at Carrick Hill.

Photographs Mick Bradley



The Old Mole (Richard Bird), Carrick Hill director Richard Heathcote, and cataloguer Helen Nancarrow processing the large and varied consignment of tools destined for the Australian Museum of Gardening (left), with Richard Bird delivering the last items (right).



Who amongst us could fail to be seduced by the poetic beauty of a trio of antique watering cans, the fading light evoking a hard day's work in the garden?

Photograph Mick Bradley

of 2013 year following an intensive twelve months of cataloguing and photography to ensure that all the items were properly documented. This was a prerequisite necessary for Carrick Hill to accept the gift of the collection. Fellow AGHS member and friend Helen Nancarrow, who followed Carrick Hill's methodology of nomenclature, whilst also recording the provenance of every piece, ably assisted Richard in this great task.

This exacting process captured much of the encyclopedic knowledge that The Old Mole has built up over the past two decades. It gives expression to the ways tools developed and shaped gardening and garden making in Australia over more than two centuries. Inherent in the process of museum cataloguing is the discipline of examining and grouping things in a coherent order. Richard and Helen decided on seven categories under which the vast range of tools and implements are recorded: Preparation and Planting, Protecting and Pests, Watering, Lawns, Control, and Harvesting, as well as a Miscellaneous category for such items as wheel barrows, horticultural medals, and children's tools and garden games.

Another important step taken by Carrick Hill has been to seek partners to support the great task of creating a dynamic museum, one with a truly national reach.

In June 2013 the Australian Garden History Society agreed to become the first partner, in the field of history and heritage. This mutually beneficial relationship saw the AGHS National Management Committee 'adopt the Australian Museum of Gardening, at Carrick Hill, South Australia, as a partner organisation for a period of five years ... to be assessed and reviewed in December 2018'. The Museum will seek other partnerships to support and assist it with its program and other areas of its operation but the AGHS link is a vital foundational building block.

In offering its support the AGHS NMC added 'The Society looks forward to being involved in the Museum and helping make it a success'. Individual AGHS members may also wish to support the museum and assist in the cultural legacy that it will provide for future generations and well as our own sense of achievement. Although some sponsorship has been secured for the fit out of the building and collection displays Carrick Hill has yet to raise the funds for the building to house the collection—the gardening shed of our dreams!

Richard Heathcote is a director of Carrick Hill and is a passionate promoter for the active conservation and interpretation of Australia's gardening heritage.



Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.